

Excerpts from my field diary (July 2009 onwards)

Pankaj Oudhia

Interesting observations on Mealybug infestation in Mysore, India.

Pankaj Oudhia

“Please wait. Please see this ornamental carefully. Mealybug is present everywhere.” I was in famous Vrindavan Garden of Mysore with eminent Entomologist Dr. R.D. Gautam. Every one visit to this garden for seeing vegetation and colorful fountains. I visited to this Garden many years back as a part of educational tour in college years. This time I was there to take the pictures of floral diversity. Dr.Gautam’s work on mealybug attracted my attention and as result I started taking pictures of mealybug in different species. We surveyed the garden up to four hours and within this short time found this insect in over 18 species. Now I can say and invite the fellow researchers to never miss the chance to visit Vrindavan garden if you are interested in mealybug.



Before visiting this Garden we visited to Mysore Zoo. We were less interested in creatures waiting for us in Zoo but interested in mealybug. First of all Dr. Gautam observed it on *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*. It was not new information for me as I saw this infestation in home garden. Later he found it on *Clerodendrum sp.* grown as ornamental in the Zoo. In very short time he found it in tens of species including on *Cestrum nocturnum*.



In Mysore, Ginger Lily has been planted as ornamental in many places including in Manas Gangotri region. We found mealybug infested Ginger Lily in almost all parts. But the Ginger Lily population in Vrindavan Garden was most affected by its infestation.



While observing it in different places I was thinking on Traditional Agricultural Knowledge practiced by the natives of Indian state Chhattisgarh. They use hundreds of herbs and herbal combinations to manage this insect at different conditions. Presence of mealybug in Vrindavan Garden is curse for ornamental plants. I tried but failed to get any information about the action the authorities were taken to manage this pest in garden. One of the caretakers informed about the application of pesticides at regular interval. “But it is not manageable. As it is public place we avoid using it in excess.” He informed. I tried to tell him about the use of weeds presence in surroundings to manage this pest in eco-friendly way but he took no interest.



[Left to Right: Dr. Saini, Dr. Gautam and Dr. Pandey]

In area near to main canal I observed severe infestation of *Parthenium hysterophorus* just near to place where hundreds of people gather for musical fountain show. The infestation was telling that no one has ever tried to manage this allergy weed. Dr. Guatam showed me the mealybug infestation on *Parthenium*. As you know, I was in Mysore for International Conference on Biodiversity and there were many sessions on *Parthenium*. During these sessions many researchers discussed about mealybug infestation on *Parthenium*. In Chhattisgarh I am observing *Parthenium* regularly but failed to find attack of this insect on it. Dr. Gautam showed it in Mysore for the first time. We found beautiful black Mantis sitting on same plant. I took so many pictures.

I am sure that Dr.Gautam will publish the observations after getting more details on its different aspects. For me it was just new topic. Yesterday I was in forest. When I was taking pictures of wild herbs I found mealybug on many plants. Without any delay I took pictures. Now I am in process of sending it to Dr.Gautam for identification. The Traditional Healers took interest in this insect and one of them said that these creatures are used in Traditional Healing as medicine. He was not much sure about it.

We collected the insects and now making plans to visit the expert Healers using medicinal insects in Traditional Healing, for confirmation.

How to Cite this Research Document

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